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RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0203
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0166
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0275
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0242
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1022
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: UNHCR REGIONAL DIRECTOR CALLS FOR ACTION ON
BHUTANESE REFUGEE SITUATION

REF: KATHMANDU 2415

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 b/d.

Bhutanese Refugees: Urgent Action Required

¶1. (C) Janet Lim, UNHCR Director for the Bureau of Asia and the Pacific, emphasized to the Ambassador on November 13 that she believed there was great urgency in finding a solution to the Bhutanese refugee situation in Nepal. She noted that the worsening security situation in the camps, which she had visited the previous day, necessitated an immediate solution. She explained that countries that might accept refugees today might not want to accept Maoist-indoctrinated refugees in five years. The Ambassador assured her that we continued to push Nepal to move forward quickly. However, the Ambassador cautioned, Bhutan was adept at delaying progress. For instance, Bhutan had taken advantage of the frequent government changes in Kathmandu, approaching each new government with the same proposals as if they were new. After each Cabinet change, the process would start afresh.

Visit of Resettlement Working Group

¶2. (C) Lim informed the Ambassador that the small resettlement working group in Geneva (reftel) would likely visit Nepal and Bhutan to discuss ideas with the governments following the December 5 meeting. The Ambassador supported this effort by resettlement countries (Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, and the U.S.) to meet the governments in Kathmandu and Thimphu to push for action. He suggested including New Delhi on the itinerary -- an idea that Lim readily agreed would be beneficial.

UNHCR Continues to Push for TWS Registration

¶3. (C) UNHCR Resident Representative Abraham noted his continued efforts for the registration of the Tibetan Welfare Society (TWS). He said that UNHCR was working with current

implementing partner Lutheran World Federation to speed construction of the Tibetan Reception Center (TRC) extension.

He noted that the number of Tibetans at TRC waiting to transit to India was up from a low of 22 people at TRC in early September to 656 people on November 13. He explained that Nepal and India were continuing to process refugees, but the recent Nepali holidays had kept some refugees at TRC longer than usual.

Comment

14. (C) Increasing international focus on the Bhutanese refugee issue is perhaps the only way to push this problem towards a resolution. Absent outside pressure, the Bhutanese seem disinclined to accept the return of any refugees, and the Nepalis too distracted to come up with a coherent, constructive policy. We should capitalize on the current increased international interest to push for a comprehensive solution.

MORIARTY